**Poetry Prompts**

**New Year’s Resolution**

Make your New Year’s resolution the title of a poem. Write a poem exploring the dimensions of the resolution, perhaps considering what would happen if you kept to it strictly for an entire year or if you broke it right away. Read Mark Halliday’s “[Refusal to Notice Beautiful Women](http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?cc=mqr;c=mqr;c=mqrarchive;idno=act2080.0044.209;rgn=main;view=text;xc=1;g=mqrg)” for inspiration.

**Random Order**

Make a list of ten words by flipping randomly through any book—a dictionary, a poetry collection, a novel, an encyclopedia–and choosing a word you see on the page. Incorporate these words into a poem made up of three stanzas composed of five lines each.

**Elegy**

Today, write an elegy, a poem that is a lament for the dead.

**Words We Rely On**

Make a list of the ten to twenty words you rely on most often, those that make up your personal lexicon. Write a poem that incorporates these words but use them differently than you normally would or transform the words by replacing them with related ones or with their opposites. When you've finished the poem, freewrite about why you use these words so frequently. What is it about their meaning, their rhythm, and their sound that appeals to you?

**Erasure Poem**

Find a text that is completely unrelated to what you normally read—a how-to manual, a 1950s interior design book, an old encyclopedia, a white paper on social media— and use it as the source of an erasure poem. Read through several pages and underline words and phrases that appeal to you and that relate to each other. Using a marker or Wite-Out, begin to delete the words around those you underlined, leaving words and phrases that you might want to use. Keep deleting the extra language, working to construct poetic lines with the words you’ve chosen to keep.

**Almost Famous**

Read up on a famous figure (living or dead) whose personality is completely different from your own. Write a poem from that person's perspective about an important event or series of events that shaped who he or she was.

**You and Me**

Write a poem that addresses a past or future version of yourself. Write in the second-person singular. Reassure a younger self, send warnings to a future self, or ask questions to which you don’t know the answers.

**Snapshot**

Write a poem that begins with a description of a photograph you have in your possession. Delve into the memories evoked by the photograph, or reveal what personal significance the photograph has for you. For inspiration, read [Natasha Trethewey’s “History Lesson.”](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/176998)